

Livingston's

SOME SALE

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Livingston's

A Romance of Extraordinary Distinction

THE MARSHAL

By Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

Author *The Perfect Tribute, etc.*

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(Continued From Saturday.)

CHAPTER XXII.
The Peasant Guide.

He flashed out the saber and desperately he slid it this way and that about the great stone, trying to find a crack, something to loosen, something that would give. And while he worked in a fever in a chill, he remembered Pietro's letter.

Then, he set down the candle end on a shelf and with trembling fingers drew off his coat and drew out the hidden papers. The wet from his bath in the water-butt had stained them a little, but only a little, for they were carefully wrapped in the bit of oilskin in which they had come. He unfolded the letter.

"If you will press the lower corner on the left-hand side," Pietro said—"the lower corner!"

And he had been concentrating all his efforts, all his despair, on the upper corner. When it is a question of life and death a man is superhumanly strong and quick sometimes, but he is also sometimes forgetful. It is an exciting and confusing thing, likely, to be working for life and liberty after years of imprisonment. Francois pushed the lower left-hand corner and like magic the great block above swung out. With his lighted candle end in his hand he slipped through the turned and swung back the door into place and turned again and faced blackness. Narrow, low, cold blackness. Quickly enough, however, with good courage, with his heart thumping out a song of hope, which he had kept down sternly till now, he walked, at times stooping low as he must because of the descent, down the secret road of the old Zappis. His candle held forward, he could see a few feet ahead, but all he could see was huge blocks of rough stone, green with mold, water dripping between them. The air he breathed was heavy and thick; through his wet clothes he felt a chill as of the grave. But what mattered the road, when the road led to freedom?

Suddenly it came to him that the passage might be blocked. It was years since Pietro had been through it, some of the stones might have fallen—it would take very little to close so narrow a way. With an anxiety which was physical pain, with breathless eagerness now, he hurried on. He had to stop to light his second candle; again he hurried on. Would the end never come? Was any mistake possible? With that he stumbled against something and fell, and the candle flew from his hand and was put out; with a hoarse groan he threw out an arm to steady himself, to rise; his hand went through a yielding, prickly mass; a glimmer came in past it—light—the end!

Pushing, crashing, staggering through, he came into a strange place. It was as if a giant had taken a huge spoon and scooped out the top of the earth deep, very deep. All of this great hollow was filled with trees and tangled undergrowth. It was full of vague shadows in the glimmer of earliest dawn. Francois, standing there sobbing, ghastly with paleness, with matted hair and wild-staring eyes and gasping mouth and wet torn clothes, was a fit demon for the haunted spot. He saw nothing, no one; with that there was a soft snapping of twigs and a movement in the darkness farthest from him; a movement toward him. Tottering he crawled to meet it; in another second the shadows had shaped into figures—a peasant boy on a horse, leading another horse.

Then he stood close to them, and the boy, leaning over without a word put something into his hand, and Francois, swaying with exhaustion, saw that it was a flask. He took a long swallow of cognac and his chilled blood leaped, and with that he

had caught the bridle from the lad and was in the saddle.

Silently, without a word spoken, they climbed the shadowy slope under the overhanging trees of Riders' hollow. Silently, fast, they rode through the pale darkness, through the slow-coming day, down wooded roads, across fields, always toward the sea. Steadily the day came; now they were galloping most of the time, only pulling in to let the horses breathe going up a hill, or to guard them from stumbling down one.

In the shadows of trees, in a lonely lane, the peasant boy stopped his horse suddenly and made a short gesture toward the flask sticking out of Francois' coat pocket. His strength was going again; it was exactly the right moment. Another swallow of brandy and he rode on with fresh courage. But something in the gesture of the peasant boy; something about his seat in the saddle, about the touch of his hands on the reins, gave Francois a curious undefined shock. In the growing daylight he turned toward the silent rider. The coat collar was up and the broad-brimmed soft hat drawn down. The slim figure, outlined against the cool pink vastness of the morning sky was clad like an ordinary young peasant—yet! There was a poise, a sure grace, which seemed unlike a peasant, which seemed like—

"Have we far to go?" Francois demanded suddenly in French.

The head turned swiftly; black exaggerated lashes lifted and under them were the blue eyes he knew.

"Alise."

He cried it out loud, reckless, forgetting everything. But she did not forget. In an instant her hand was on his mouth, and she was whispering in terror.

"Francois, dear Francois, be careful. We are not safe yet. We have a village to ride through—see, there is a house. It is almost time for them to be awake. Ride fast. It is two miles yet."

They were racing again over the soft ground, the horses' unshod feet making little noise, and Francois' heart was playing mad music. No need now of cognac. Then they were galloping down the sand of a

lonely beach, and with that there was a little group of people and a boat drawn up; and they had pulled in the horses, and Francois felt himself lifted off like a child and lying like a very little, worn-out child in the general's arms; and the general was crying, swearing, hugging him without shame. Pietro was there; Pietro was rubbing the thin hands in a futile useless sort of way, and holding them by turns to his face. Alise, her peasant hat now off, bent over them, lovelier than ever before, not minding her boy's dress, and smiled at him, wordless. There was a huge man also who took the horses, and Francois wondered if he had heard aright that Alise called him "little Battista." Wondering very much at everything, the voices grew far away and the faces uncertain, and he decided that it was without doubt a dream, and that Battista would unlock the door shortly and bring in his breakfast. And with that he knew nothing more till he awoke in a boat.

(Continued Tomorrow.)

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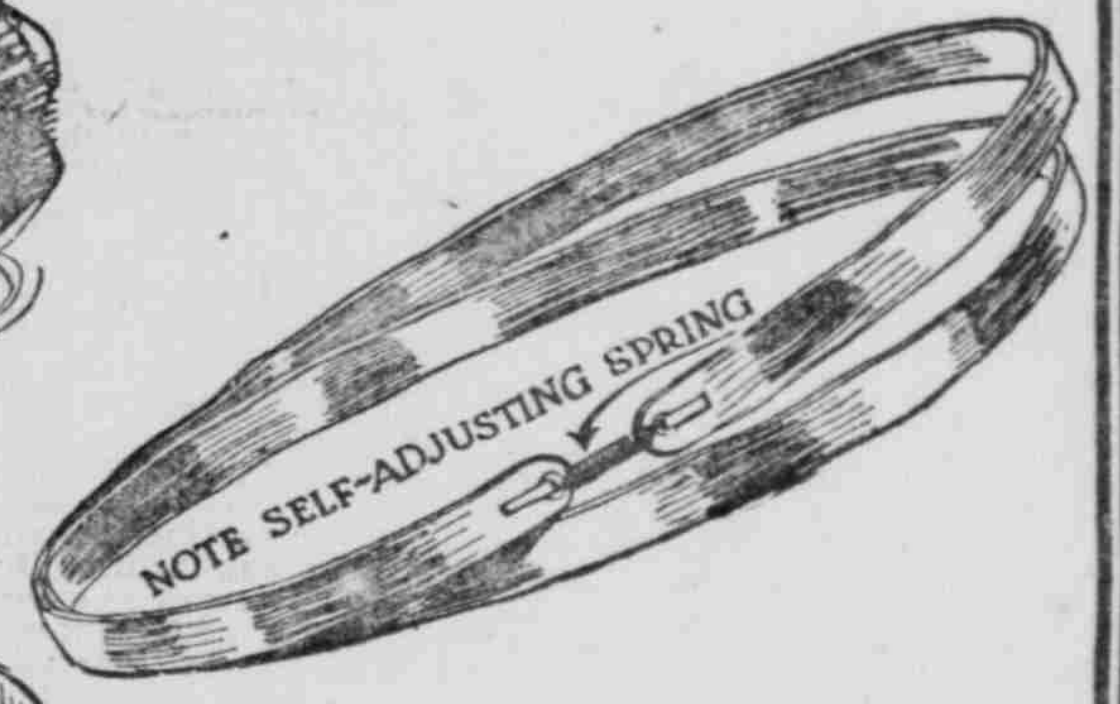
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Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the International Women's Suffrage alliance, addressed the annual convention of the National American Women's Suffrage association at Washington last week.

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